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ABSTRACT

From September through November 1986, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) conducted a follow-up survey of Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) 8% program participants in the 1985-86 school year. The DPI is responsible for administering half of the JTPA 8% Education Coordination and Grants for economically disadvantaged youth, ages 14-21. Surveys were completed by 1,042 students, a return rate of 79.9 percent. During DPI monitoring visits, students were interviewed and asked many of the same questions that appeared on the survey. Verbal responses substantiated the statewide survey results. Students indicated that the programs helped them stay in school, helped them prepare for a lifetime of work, improved their self-esteem, helped them improve their performance in other classes, improved their school attendance, and improved their attitude toward school. They said the programs also helped them become aware of the many factors involved in getting and keeping a job that they had not learned in other classes and helped them see the connection between school and work. (The report includes graphs and narrative.) (YLB)

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JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP ACT

JTPA 8%

Follow-up Summary Report

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Follow-up Summary Report

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Introduction

From September through November 1986, the Department of Public Instruction conducted a follow-up survey of Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) 8% program participants in the 1985-86 school year.

The DPI is responsible for administering half of the JTPA 8% Education Coordination and Grants for economically disadvantaged at-risk youth, ages 14 to 21.* The Wisconsin Board of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education (VTAE) administers the other half for disadvantaged adults. The state's JTPA 8% funds are allocated to the DPI and VTAE by the Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations.

Section 123 of the Job Training Partnership Act indicates that 8 percent of a state's JTPA funds:

Shall be used by any state agency responsible for education and training
- to provide services to eligible participants through cooperative agreements
- to facilitate education services for eligible participants

State education agencies which administer JTPA 8% funds work with people who are most in need, emphasize long-term institutional change, and form partnerships among the numerous agencies and institutions which provide education and job training.

Through DPI's administration of its one-half of the JTPA 8% funds, economically disadvantaged at-risk youth receive individualized, long-term, continuous programming. Sections 14.28(3)(b) and 145.28(3)3, Wis. Stats., require JTPA 8% funds to be used for youth who are dropouts or are one or more years behind in acquisition of credits toward graduation to ensure serving those who are *most in need* of help to graduate. (See Appendix A for a summary of characteristics of all JTPA participants in the 1985-86 school year.)

The JTPA 8% programs have been a catalyst for long-term institutional change. These programs were the seeds that promoted the Children At Risk legislation through the Department of Public Instruction and the Youth Policy and Law Office. The employment and partnership concepts of JTPA were incorporated into the state Education for Employment initiative (Wisconsin Act 75). JTPA has demonstrated to schools how to implement components of those two standards. The components can now be expanded to serve all youth through non-JTPA funding sources.

The role of the DPI as administrator of one-half of the JTPA 8% funds has helped the state promote partnerships by coordinating JTPA employment and training programs between schools and other agencies so that parallel, duplicative systems are *not* developed. The JTPA 8% staff at the DPI is part of the Bureau for Vocational Education, in which the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act is administered. The staff promotes joint planning, coordination, and implementation regardless of the funding source. DPI JTPA staff members are assigned regional Service Delivery Area (SDA) responsibilities, which has resulted in better coordination between education and the employment and training field and better access to SDA's IIA funds for in-school programs.

In the 1985-86 school year, the JTPA programs emphasized a range of services to help participants remain in school and earn credits toward graduation. All students were assessed formally and informally by school staff to determine what classes they had failed or were doing poorly in, what abilities they had, and what support services they needed. Some of the formal assessment instruments which schools used were CAPS/COPS/COPES, GATB, MESSA, MECA, and Career Planning Systems. Informal assessments were based on grade-point averages, credit deficiencies,

**Refer to the "Annual Report for Job Training Partnership Act: 8% Education Coordination and Grants Administered by the Department of Public Instruction: July 1, 1985, to June 30, 1986" for a summary of the year's activities, DPI's goals and objectives, and program outcomes.*

number of absences, discipline referrals, and comments by teachers. Based on the assessment information, individualized training plans were written which identified goals and objectives for each student to help earn credits toward graduation and prepare for employment.

School staff offered dropout recruitment; provided tutoring and credit remediation; helped students meet Private Industry Council (PIC)-approved competencies; offered career guidance and counseling; communicated with parents; arranged and supervised work experience; worked with academic and vocational teachers as an advocate for JTPA students; and made referrals to other programs and agencies. Some of the services are funded through JTPA 8%, some through SDAs/PICs, and some through local district matching funds. Funding varies for each project around the state.

DPI sent follow-up surveys to students who participated in the JTPA programs in the 1985-86 school year. The department received 1,042 completed surveys, resulting in a return rate of 79.9 percent. Half of the respondents were male, and half were female. Results of this survey are included in the graphs and narrative of this report.

During DPI monitoring visits, students were interviewed and asked many of the same questions as stated on the follow-up survey. Their verbal responses substantiated the statewide survey results. The students indicated that the programs helped them stay in school, helped them prepare for a lifetime of work, improved their self-esteem, helped them improve their performance in other classes, improved their school attendance, and improved their attitude toward school. *The students said the programs also helped them become aware of the many factors involved in getting and keeping a job that they had not learned in other classes and helped them see the connection between school and work.*

When DPI staff members interviewed school administration and staff, these people consistently expressed enthusiasm for the JTPA program operating in their district. They said they have witnessed previously disillusioned students become successful in school and get back on track toward graduation.

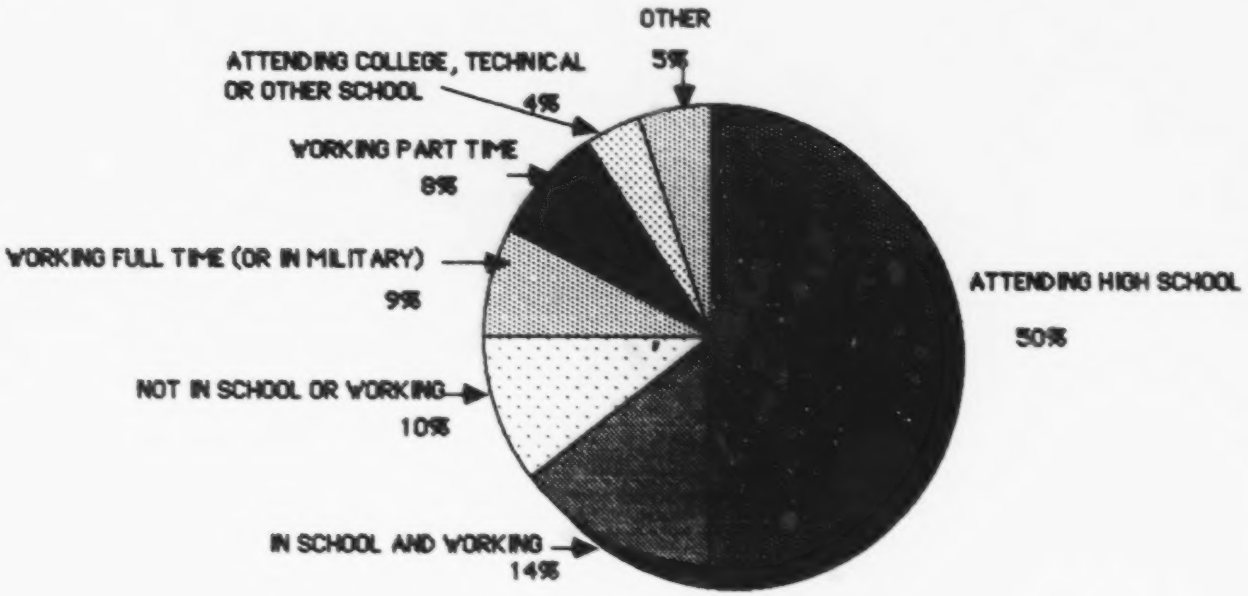
Dropout rates have decreased in many districts, although no data exists to indicate the decrease was the direct result of JTPA programs. Many factors can be attributed to the lower rates, one of which may be JTPA 8% programs, because the primary emphasis is to serve those who need the most help to ensure that they graduate. A comparison of dropout rates reported to DPI verifies that districts with JTPA 8% programs have lower dropout rates than districts which do not participate in the programs. The dropout rates have decreased in many districts in direct correlation to the years JTPA programs have been funded.

The other important factor which surfaced during interviews with school administration and staff is the correlation between JTPA and the new state standards. Nearly everyone interviewed said the JTPA program has demonstrated to districts methods of meeting the Children At Risk, Education for Employment, and K-12 Career Guidance standards. Through JTPA, the school administration and staff were able to implement components of those standards on a small scale for students most in need of the services and now understand how these components can be expanded schoolwide to help meet the standards.

The DPI expresses sincere thanks to all of the JTPA 8% program operators and their staffs for the fine effort put forth to collect this data. Questions about the follow-up survey or JTPA 8% in Wisconsin can be directed to Wayne A. Sherry, Administrator, Job Training/Special Programs Section, Bureau for Vocational Education, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, P.O. Box 7841, Madison, WI 53707-7841; (608) 267-9166.

Student Survey Questions and Responses

Graph 1 *What are you doing now?*



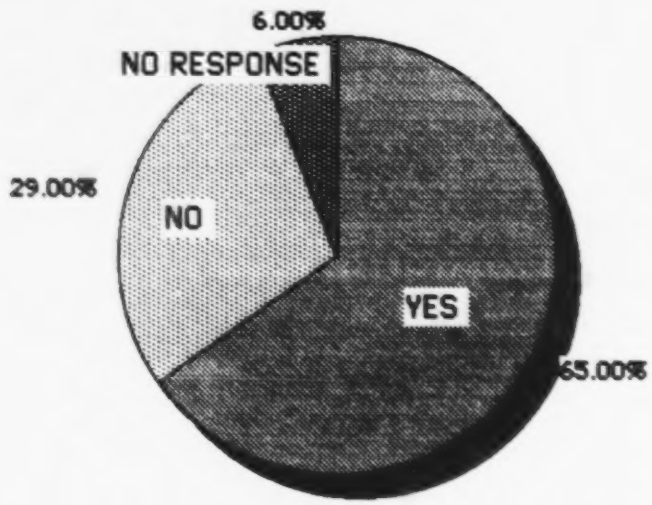
Fifty percent of those surveyed said they were still in high school. Most of the students involved in JTPA 8% programs were younger than seniors. School staff believe (through experience) that the programs have a more positive impact on younger disadvantaged at-risk youth because the habits which adversely affect their success in school are not as ingrained as in older students.

Thirty-five percent said they were either working full time or part time, attending post-secondary school, or combining school and work.

Five percent answered "other" and 10 percent answered "not in school or working."*

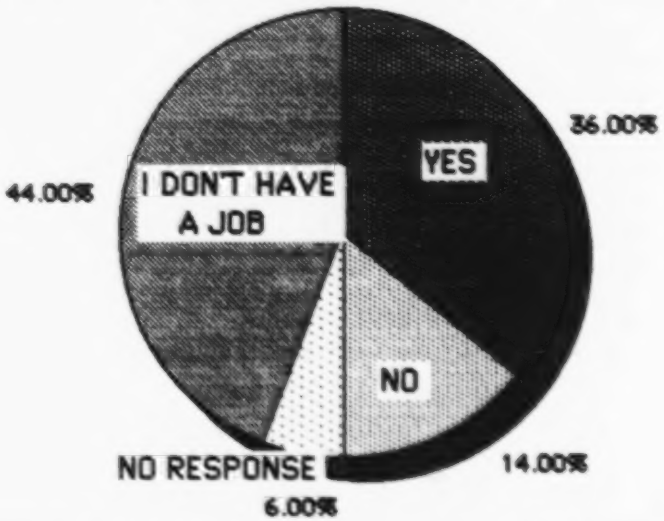
**The 1986 Wisconsin average teen unemployment rate was 14.5 percent. The 1985 rate was 18.1 percent.*

Graph 2 *Did the program help you stay in school?*



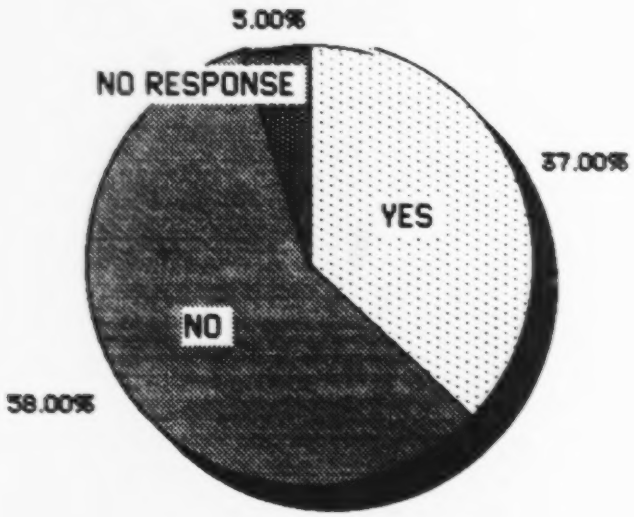
Sixty-five percent of those surveyed said the program helped them stay in school. Although 29 percent said it did not help them stay in school, interviews with students during DPI monitoring visits indicated that some students either had no intention of leaving school before graduation or had not thought of it as an option. Many of the students were 14 and 15 years old. The survey and monitoring visits indicated that students in ninth grade do not perceive themselves as planning to drop out despite the fact that they are already behind in acquisition of credits.

Graph 3 *Was it easier to get a job because of the program?*



Thirty-six percent of the students said it was easier to get a job because of the program. (Graph 4 shows that 37 percent were employed at the time of the survey.) Fourteen percent said it was not easier to get a job, and 44 percent said they did not have a job. The latter answer can be attributed in part to 50 percent of those surveyed still being in high school and 4 percent attending postsecondary school.

Graph 4 *Are you employed?*

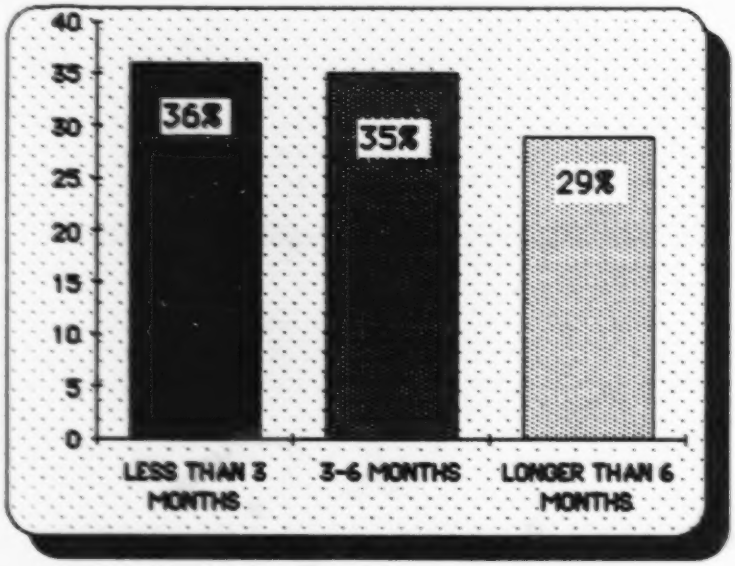


The JTPA 8% programs serve youth in grades 9 through 12. Although 58 percent said they were not employed when surveyed, 54 percent were either still in high school or postsecondary school (see Graph 1).

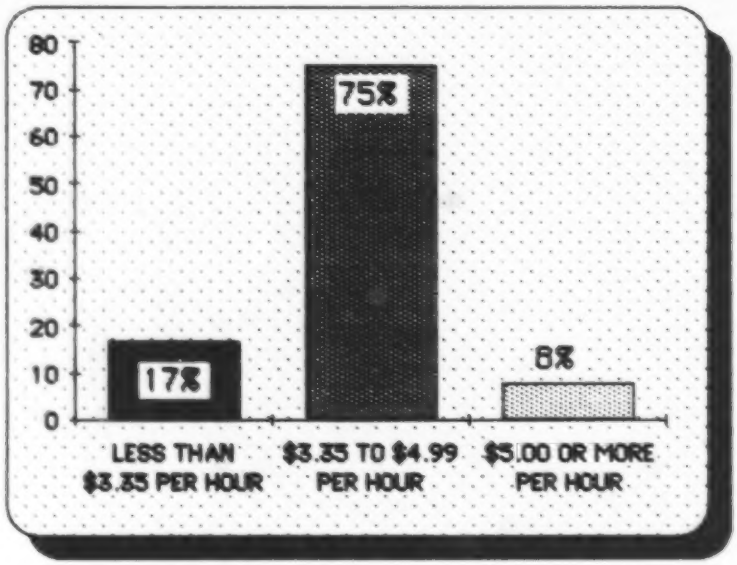
Note: According to the previous chart, 44 percent said they did not have a job, and 14 percent said "no," it was not easier to get a job because of the program, for a total of 58 percent. That corresponds exactly to the 58 percent on this question who said they were not employed. The "yes" and "no response" figures are each only 1 percent different when comparing both graphs.

For those who answered "yes" to "Are you employed?":

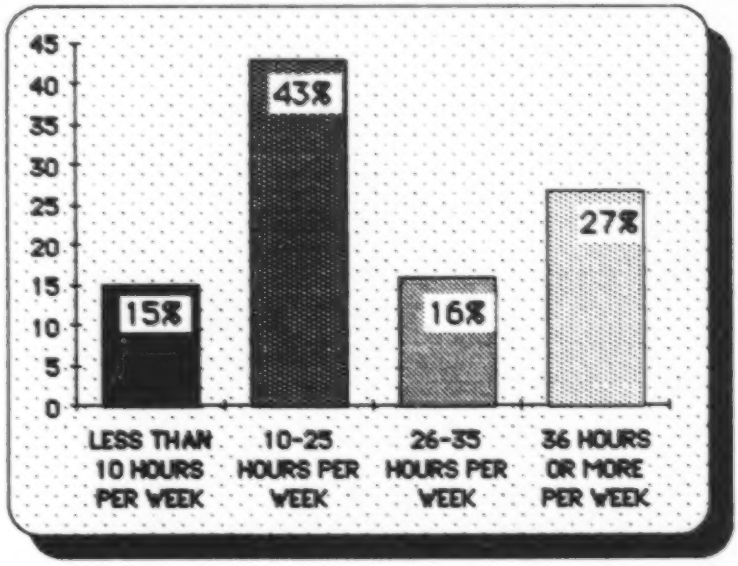
Graph 5 *How long have you been employed?*



Graph 6 *What is your hourly wage?*

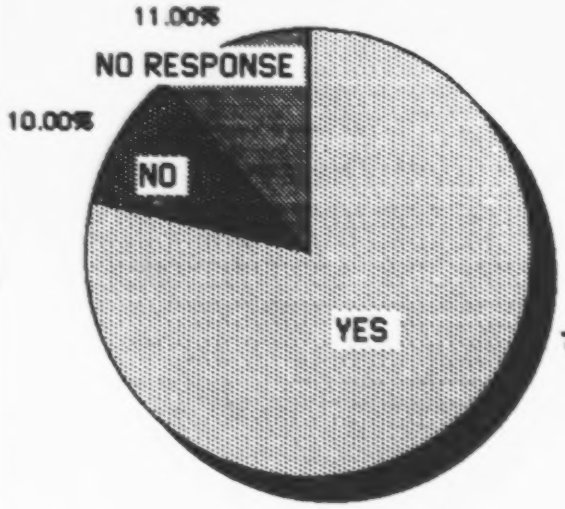


Graph 7 *How many hours per week do you work?*

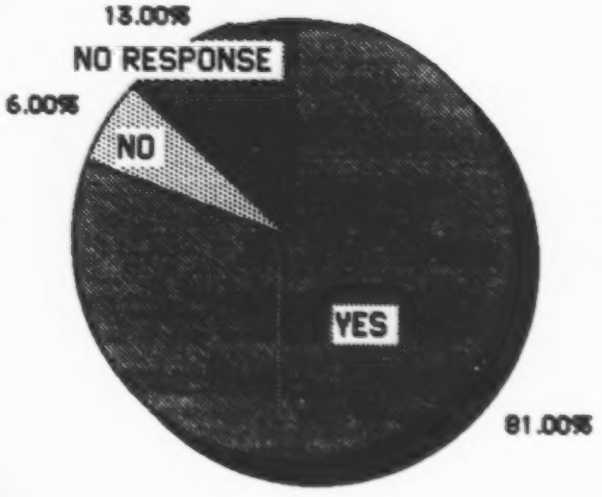


Of those youths who said they were working, responses show that 71 percent were employed for six months or less, 75 percent were earning $3.35 to $4.99 per hour, slightly more than 50 percent were working less than 25 hours per week, and slightly less than 50 percent were working more than 25 hours per week.

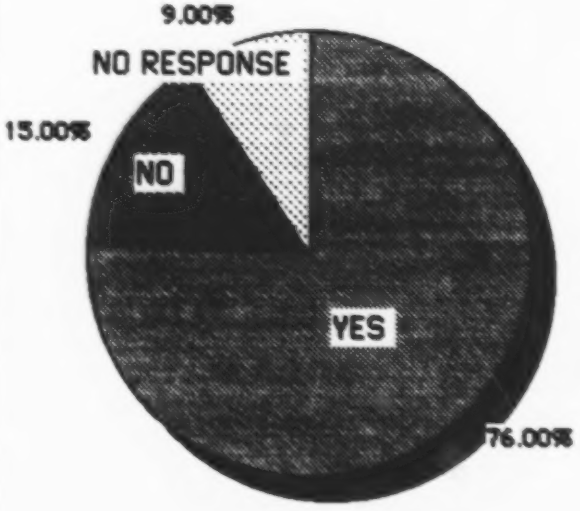
Do you see yourself as having to work or support yourself for most of your life?



Graph 8
Response by total group

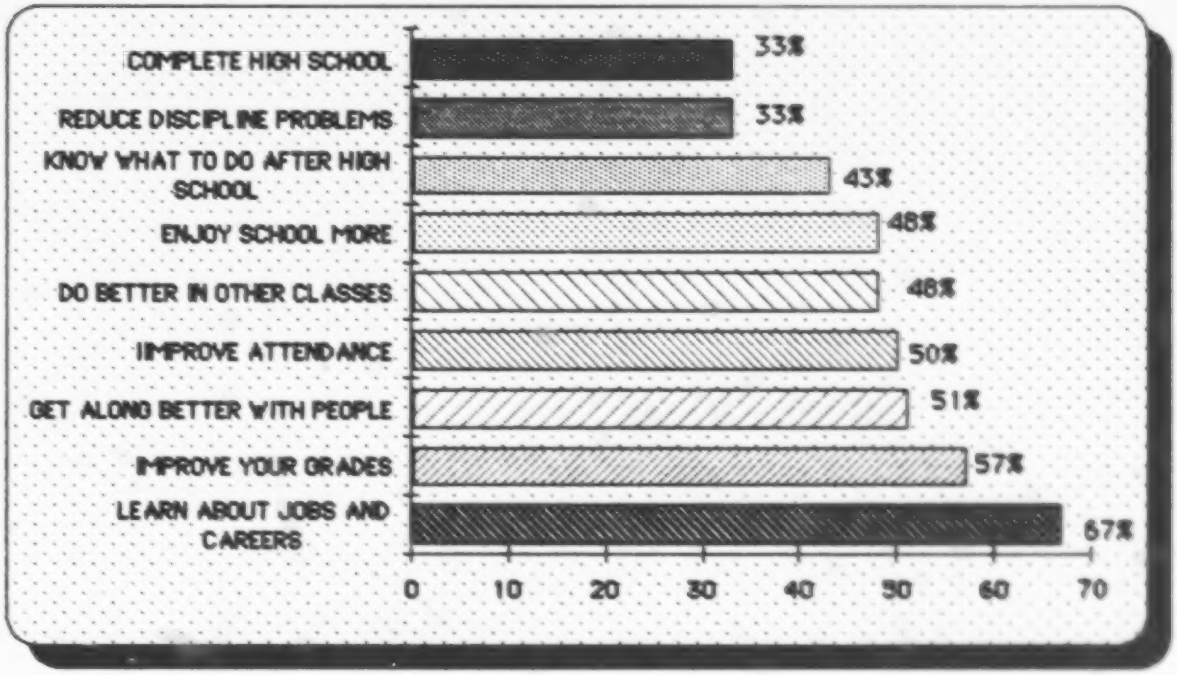


Graph 9
Response by males



Graph 10
Response by females

Graph 11 *What did the program help you to do?*



For this question, JTPA 8% students were asked to respond to as many of the statements as applied to them. The number of responses indicates that each student checked at least four of the nine items.

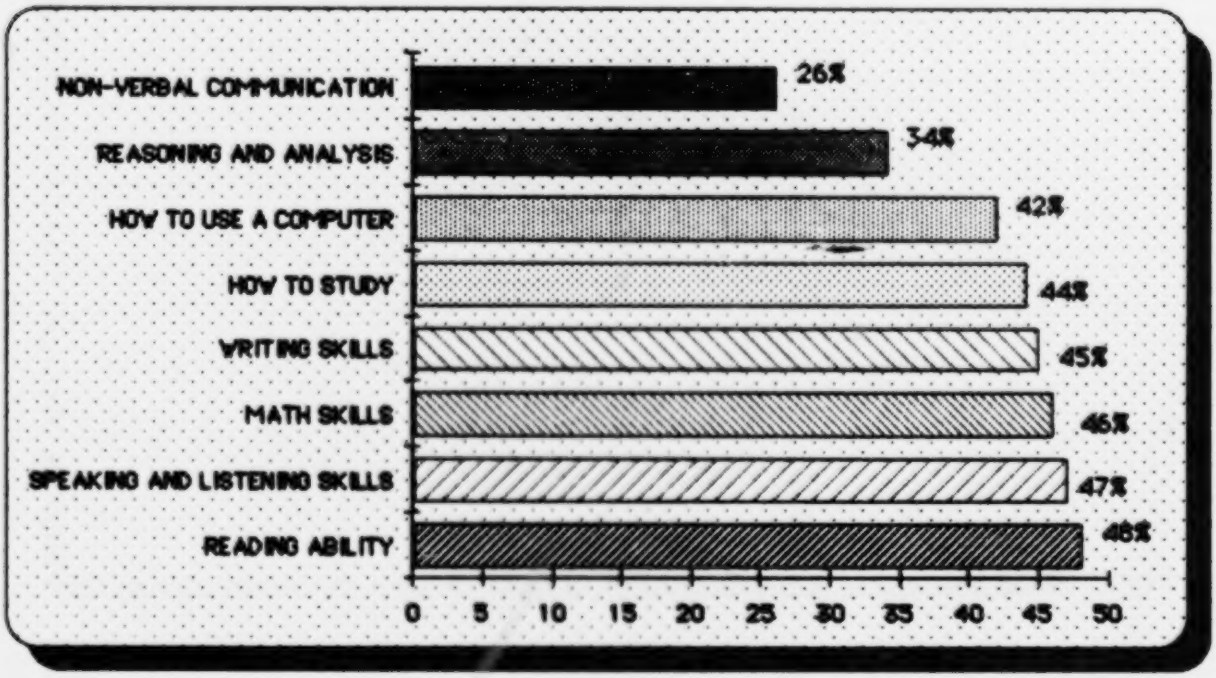
Over one-half of the students responding to the survey said the JTPA program helped them learn about jobs and careers, improve grades, get along better with people, and improve attendance.

Nearly one-half said they improved their grades in other classes and enjoyed school more, and they said the program helped them know what to do after high school.

Only 33 percent indicated that the program helped reduce their discipline problems and complete high school. However, not all JTPA students have or perceive themselves to have discipline problems. This survey reflects *their* perceptions of the program. Also, one-half of those surveyed were still in high school and therefore would not have been inclined to indicate that the program "helped them complete high school." As mentioned earlier in this report, interview sessions with students during DPI monitoring visits indicated that some students, especially younger ones, had no intention of dropping out. They may not have realized that failing one or two classes would make graduating a more difficult accomplishment.

Because of the JTPA program in your school, which of the skills listed below did you learn about or do better at?

Graph 12 *Basic Skills*

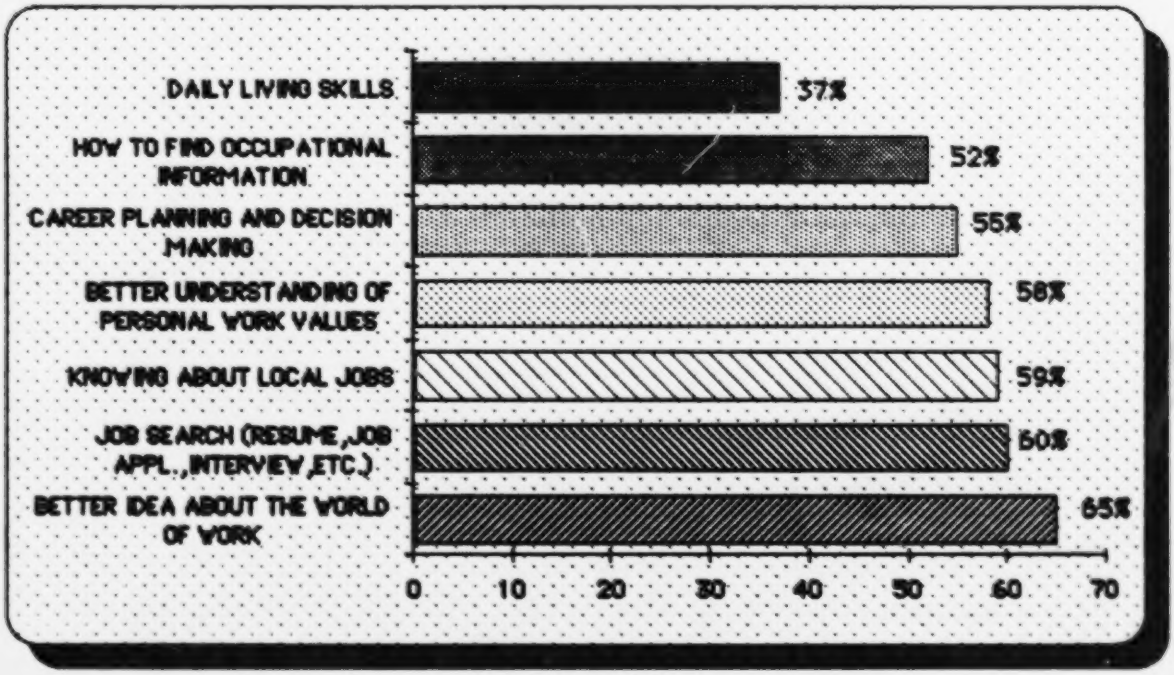


Forty-two to 48 percent of the students said the skills they learned or improved included reading, speaking and listening, math, writing, studying, and using computers.

"Reasoning and analysis" and "non-verbal communication" were checked by 34 percent and 25 percent of the students, respectively.

Not all JTPA 8% projects in the 1985-86 school year were designed to teach specific basic skills, although they were increased substantially for the 1986-87 school year. Also, not all students in the program had difficulties in every basic skills area. Based on the number of responses, each student checked at least three of the eight items for this question.

Graph 13 *Pre-employment Skills – How to Get a Job*

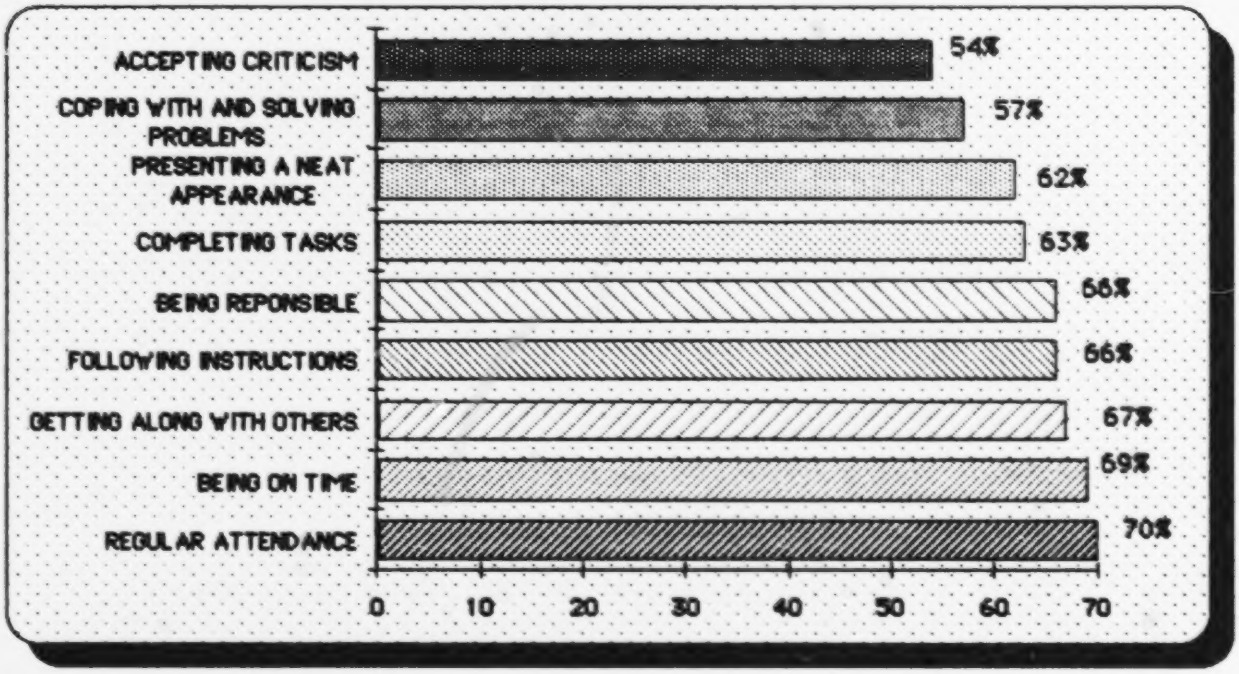


More than one-half (52 to 65 percent) of the students said they learned about the world of work, how to search and apply for jobs, local job markets, personal work values, career planning and decision making, and finding occupational information.

Thirty-seven percent said they learned daily living skills (housing, bank accounts, public transportation).

Based on the number of responses, each student checked at least four of the seven items for this question.

Graph 14 *Work Maturity Skills – How to Keep a Job*

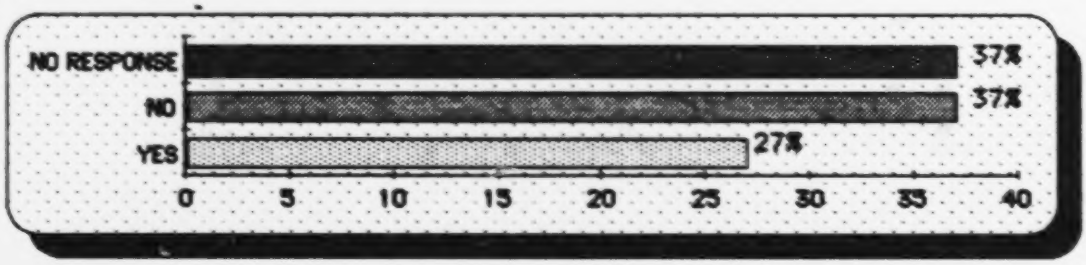


Based on the number of responses, each student checked an average of six of the nine items for this question.

Well over one-half (54 to 70 percent) of the students said they learned the importance of regular attendance, being on time, getting along with others, following instructions, being responsible, completing tasks, presenting a neat appearance, coping with and solving problems, and accepting criticism as factors which are important for keeping a job.

Addressing this competency is one of the highest priorities in the JTPA 8% programs. The programs provide students with the skills and attitudes needed in the work world and give them an opportunity to learn how to apply them.

Graph 15 *Specific Job Skills*



Twenty-seven percent of the students surveyed said they learned specific job skills (such as those learned through a work experience, job shadowing, or vocational class). It should be noted that one-half of these students were still in high school, which means they probably were not qualified or prepared to work. The work experience is often funded through Service Delivery Areas/Private Industry Councils and run by a person other than the teacher associated with the JTPA 8% program. Students may also learn specific job skills in vocational education classes, however the direct link to JTPA may not be obvious to them.

JTPA 8% programs for the 1986-87 school year include much more emphasis on teaching specific job skills, and figures in the next annual follow-up should reflect an increased percentage of students who say they gained these skills.

Conclusion

Overall, the data from the JTPA 8% follow-up survey and comments made during monitoring visits show extensive support for the programs by students, teachers, administrators, and the community. Several significant strengths of the programs in the state surfaced through the survey data and the monitoring visits.

Students in the JTPA programs were ages 14 to 21 and previously at risk of dropping out of school (100 percent were a year or more behind in credits) or had dropped out and returned to be in a JTPA 8% program. They were earning credits toward graduation; receiving help with academic, vocational, and personal problems; learning how to get and keep a job; and getting along better with people. The approach of providing individualized, long-term, continuous programming to develop skills and attitudes in the classroom and to apply them to the work world has proven to be an effective deterrent for youth who are at risk of dropping out of school.

Improvements were not only recognized by adults (according to statements and data provided during monitoring visits), but also by the students. Records on attendance, credit acquisition, grades, discipline referrals, basic skill levels, and competency levels indicate considerable improvement for many of the students.

The programs are operated and staffed by existing school personnel under the direction and supervision of the local school boards and administrators. As a result, these personnel are an integral part of each district's programming, not a separate entity that ends when the funding ends. Each $1 of JTPA 8% funds generates an additional $1 to $3 in local districts through cash contributions for match; in-kind dollars (some of which are counted locally as match); and coordination with other funding sources such as PIC 78%, Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act, and special education. DPI staff members closely monitor and provide technical assistance to these programs.

Another notable strength of the programs, as mentioned in the introduction, is that it has become obvious to local district staff and administrators what can be done to implement the new standards (Children At Risk, Education for Employment, K-12 Career Guidance, Curriculum Development). DPI JTPA staff members were actively involved in designing those standards, and their influence was based on the successful components of JTPA 8% programs. The programs demonstrated what schools could do to provide all youth with a well-rounded education, a diploma, and preparation for a lifetime of employment.

Appendix A

DPI JTPA 8% Participant Characteristics*
Program Year 1985-86

	Number	Percent of Total
Total participants	1,862	100
Male	979	53
Female	883	47
Age		
14 to 15	553	30
16 to 19	1,261	68
20 to 21	48	3
Education status		
Student	1,530	82
Dropout	332	18
White	1,278	69
Minority	584	31
Black	381	10
Hispanic	114	6
American Indian/Alaskan	68	3
Asian/Pacific Islander	21	1
Handicapped	384	21
Public assistance	830	45
Economically disadvantaged	1,611	87
Eligible because of barrier	251	13

	Number in Special Categories
Limited English proficiency	61
Offender	16
Handicapped	384
Displaced homemaker	17
Welfare recipient	765
Aid to Families with Dependent Children recipient	646
Wisconsin Employment Opportunities Program	3
General assistance recipient	20
Unemployment insurance claimant	1
Unemployed	164
School dropout	332
Student (high school or less)	1,521
High school graduate or equivalent or above	5
Post-high school	4
Single parent (head of household)	48
Migrant and seasonal worker	10
Refugee	9
Teenage parent	93
One or more years behind in credits	1,862

**Statistics taken from the "Wisconsin Information Management System End of the Year Report for Program Year 1985-86."*

Appendix B

Quotations from Follow-up Survey

The JTPA follow-up survey asked participants to "briefly state how the JTPA program (or class) helped you or made things more difficult for you in school." The following are selected comments from that section of the survey.

"Well, I guess in the class everyone was equal, we shared something special and that was being a friend through someone else—the teacher! You looked forward to the class because he always made you happy. You trusted him and that made it easier."

"Helped think of a career that would be good for me and explained why school is so important to find or help get a job!"

"It helped me when I went in for interviews and it will help me keep a job. It also helped me communicate with people a lot better."

"I think more people should get involved with the program."

"The JTPA program helped me to know what was right to put on an application and I really learned a lot. It improved my attitude toward life and made me more responsible."

"Good program for teenagers."

"Thought it was great!"

"Learn to like school. Helping with writing and listening."

"Improved study habits, mostly in English."

"It was a neat program."

"Good for people who have problems."

"I think that it was worthwhile, it helped me with jobs that I need to know."

"I thought it was very informative, and I think more people should join."

"I was doing really bad in school, and I went to the JTPA class, and it really improved me. I started to get a lot better grades. It also let me know what jobs are available."

"Gave first job ever. First income. It gave me responsibility."

"It brought me out of my shyness and made it easier to talk to people and go up to the front of a classroom and speak to my classmates. The JTPA program also taught me how to work with and get along with other people."

"If it weren't for the program, I wouldn't have graduated."

"It helped me with the responsibility that others count on me for doing a good job. It helped me have more confidence in myself for doing work and knowing I can do it. It's helped me get along with coworkers and make new friends. All in one it's built up my self-confidence."

"It stayed about the same but gives me a better outlook on what it is going to be like to get a job."

"It made things easier for me last year. Because I could get help in my work and class that I was having problems in. I would like to have this program going for a long time because it is really a great idea. Thank you."

"It gave me the incentive to attend more regularly. It got me out of school for half a day and made school much more bearable."

"The only reason I like to come to school is because I have a job."

"I really enjoyed working on the program. It was the best job I ever had because it made me feel important."

"The JTPA has given me confidence. It also has taught me that I can get a job if I try."

"The JTPA class helped me a lot to improve in school. The program helped me to have a better image of myself, and when I needed encouraging I received it. One of the other things that helped me was working with other kids."

"It helped me a great deal. To study better and develop better grades than before. Changed my mind about how important school is in your life. To help your lifestyle in the future."

"Not only did the JTPA program help me get a job for the summer, it also offered me a special class that really helped me in school, society, etc. I recommend this program, and I hope it will continue. I also was in the JTPA program involved with the SAM (school-age mothers) program in Janesville. This helped a lot of needy people get jobs! It's a great program."

"Gave me knowledge of skills or things I could do to please my employer. Taught me and gave me experience in the area of work I was interested in. The class allowed me to ask for help in classes that I never could gain an accurate understanding of. In other words, I was in need of learning some skills or abilities on a one-to-one basis. The teacher was also a caring, very interested-in-you teacher which made class and school more enjoyable. She wanted to help you in any way anytime."

"It improved my writing skills. I learned how to work the computer and I got to know new people as time passed. The staff is everything that I needed and more. I could come to them with outside problems, and I got over them without going and doing something that I would regret later in life. I got super advice from them. The staff members are very well-trained people. They did not help me find a job. I wanted to do it on my own and I did. Whenever we had bad times together we always pulled through and came out for the best. Very good friends to have."

"It helped me to respect school better."

"Helped me go to school more often because they called my house when I was late."

"Made me realize I need school more than I thought."

"I feel the program helped me learn much that I wouldn't have learned otherwise."

"It helped me learn how to handle problems better. It helped me know what would be expected of me in life, my goals, etc. Changed my attitude about school."

"The program helped me to understand that I really should get a good education."

"SER got me a job and helped me to stay in school and work toward a high school diploma."

"It helped me stay in school. It helped me deal with my problems."

"They've helped me finish school. This is my last year of high school. If it weren't for them I wouldn't be graduating this year. I like all of the teachers and counselors. They really helped me."

"SER helped me a lot; I began to feel better about myself and for the first time in my life, I actually liked school. I realize I had a poor attendance record, but I know I will do much better if I can re-enroll. It's a good school and I really want to get my high school diploma."

"When I was in school, I stayed out of trouble with my parents and the law. I tried to re-enroll at one time, but the program was full."

"It helped me progress toward the end of my high school education and it's given me a feeling or sense of belonging. It's given me a better shot at making something out of myself."

"The JTPA program helped me and made school a little easier. It helped with food preparation, a job training program, and a social behaviors class, and it gave us students a little free time to ourselves. The hours are great and the teachers are, too. Keep up the good work!"

"Spectrum schedule made it easier for me as a mother to get an education and tend to my child. It was nice and I enjoyed cooking my own lunch."

"Milwaukee Spectrum has helped me to be more concerned with school and my attendance."

"Helped my attendance and brought me closer to graduation."

"I used to skip classes all the time because they were too boring. Now they seem more interesting. I now attend all my classes regularly."

"This program helped pull my grade up from a 'D' average to a solid 'B' average. I have not skipped school for three years, and I have not gotten into any trouble at school for the past two years. Overall I would say that this program has helped me out a lot."

"It helped me get a job and understand people. It made me more responsible and more serious about my grades."

"My supervisor in the cafeteria made me feel real good because I did a good job and she told me I did!"

"My JTPA tutoring helped me most this past year. I was failing biology, but my tutor helped me learn and pass the course."

"Helped finish high school—otherwise would have never graduated."

"The JTPA program made me realize that I have to do my very best at all I do to make it in this world, especially if I want to achieve my goals."

"I always had trouble balancing my activities outside of school. It was difficult but I enjoyed the program very much because it helped me learn more than what I learned in school. The class taught me how to find what I value in a job, in myself, and in life. That's very important! SCHOOLS NEVER TEACH THAT!! Schools are too concerned with societal values—what other people think you should value."

"I listened to teachers harder and learned more of my responsibilities at school like getting good grades will give you an advantage in getting a job in the business world."

"It helped me be more attentive and increased my attendance."